# The Breast Cancer Drug that Improved 2.7 Million Women's Lives: Latest from Stand Up for Science's 'Traces Thursday'

*Weekly series explores case studies in scientific patience and why basic science funding can't wait.*

WASHINGTON, DC, UNITED STATES, September 11, 2026 / EINPresswire.com/ -- Stand Up for Science has released part three of "Traces Thursday," a Substack series exploring the stories of how some of the most impactful medical breakthroughs were developed over the course of decades.

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The third installment, "Antibodies as Drugs," covers the story of Herceptin, an innovative treatment for some types of breast cancer. Scientists first developed lab-grown antibodies to target tumor-causing proteins in 1975. Nearly ten years later, the HER2 protein was discovered to be responsible for breast tumor growth in some cancers. An innovative oncologist developed Herceptin to target the HER2 protein, and Herceptin was approved for use in 1998.

> Herceptin's remarkable success...laid the foundation for the widespread use of lab-made antibodies as drugs."
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> *Dr. Jeremy Berg, author of Traces Thursday series*

The weekly series is written by Dr. Jeremy Berg, former director of the National Institute of General Medical Sciences at the National Institutes of Health and former Editor-in-Chief of Science magazine, now a member of the Board of Advisors with Stand Up for Science. Each week, Berg dives into a historical example that shows why the development of these therapeutics take so long, including the challenges that slow down the process.

"Herceptin showed remarkable success in its clinical trials and today an estimated 2.7 million women have been treated with it. Its success laid the foundation for the now widespread use of

lab-made antibodies as drugs, which are used to treat cancers, autoimmune diseases, allergies, osteoporosis, infections like Ebola, and more. None of these life-saving measures would have been possible without sustained investment in the research and development that eventually led to these breakthroughs," said Berg.

The series helps underscore the case for sustained basic research investments in science, particularly biomedical research, as a worthwhile pursuit. The landmark therapies presented in the series all depended on long-term research funding for their development.

Subsequent posts will be published on the Science Fight Club Substack each Thursday.

Berg is available for comment.

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Stand Up for Science is a grassroots, Washington, D.C. based, non-profit organization mobilizing the fight for science and democracy. Stand Up for Science was formed in February 2025 in response to actions affecting federal science agencies and funding of the American scientific ecosystem. On March 7th, Stand Up for Science mobilized over 50,000 people at 170+ events across the world on its first National Day of Action. Federal scientists across multiple agencies (NIH, EPA, NASA, FEMA) have chosen Stand Up for Science as the platform to publish their open letters of concern. Stand Up for Science is a 501(c)(4) non-profit organization [EIN: 33-4154429] and donations are not tax-deductible.

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